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A WORD OF WARNING

GIFT
Mrs. J. Ly. Roosevelt
2/28/11

TO

DEMOCRATS,

FROM A

LIFE-LONG VOTER WITH THE PARTY.

By William Pugh

FOR GRATUITOUS DISTRIBUTION.

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A WORD OF WARNING

TO

DEMOCRATS,

FROM A

LIFE-LONG VOTER WITH THE PARTY.

Dear Friends:—

For the last forty years I have been an earnest and faithful voter in the Democratic party; adhering strictly to its usages and policy; and uniformly casting my vote for the *regular nominee;* and I do not remember, during the whole time, to have ever voted even a scratched ticket.

On the inauguration of the Kansas policy, however, under James Buchanan, the then head of Democracy, I forsook the party, because of what I conceived to be the dishonesty of its policy, although some of you, my friends, still adhere to it, and are seemingly unable to see anything especially wrong in its course.

Immediately after the election of Mr. Lincoln, a large number of the Southern States broke out into open rebellion, for the avowed purpose of destroying the Government.

The nation was plunged into a terrible and deadly war. The enemies of republican institutions are aiming at the destruction of our noble Government, and yet, my dear friends, you and I view this great struggle from different stand points. You fail to see, as I do, that it is the duty of the Democratic party, not only with its utmost strength to aid the Government in subduing the rebellion, but to abstain from every word or act that shall in the slightest degree give aid and comfort to its enemies. You fail to

see, as I do, that the Democratic policy has a direct tendency to aid and encourage rebellion, and to weaken and discourage the Government.

In the terrible storm of civil war which is now sweeping over the land, we find ourselves suddenly arrayed on opposite sides of a question involving vast consequences to us all. We stand, as it were, face to face, gazing at the question lying between us. We cannot both be right, yet neither is able to convince the other of his error.

Were this a mere political question, simply a scramble for office, such as we have witnessed in years gone by, I would be content to remain silent; but, when I see the enemies of republican institutions clutching at the throat of our Government, and that Government apparently in the agonies of dissolution, I cannot restrain myself from making an effort to show to you the consequences which are almost certain to follow a successful carrying out of the Democratic policy. To spread before your eyes the picture which looks so terrible to mine, and if you will bear with me, my friends, I will endeavor, as briefly as possible, to show that the policy of the Democratic party, if successful, must, of necessity, lead to nothing but evil, and, perhaps, to the ruin of our country.

Before proceeding further in my self-imposed task, allow me to premise that, in using the words "Democratic" and "Democracy," I refer simply to the party organization of that name, and not to the *principles of Democracy*, which I regard as essentially different from the *policy* now advocated by that party. With this explanation I proceed.

The policy of the Democratic party, as I understand it, from the addresses of its leaders, the speeches of its candidates, and the catch-words of the rank-and-file, is "*Compromise*," "*Peace*," "*To put down the Administration*," "The Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was," and something, not clearly defined, about *repudiation* of the United States debt.

I propose, my friends, to examine these parts of the

Democratic policy in detail, in order to see the end to which they will lead us. We begin, then, with

COMPROMISE.

Who is to offer "Compromise?" Are the rebels to ask for it, or is the nation to succumb and beg for a compromise? I will not affect ignorance. It is the Government that the Democratic party would have sue for peace. But what can the Government offer as a compromise to the Rebels that they have not always possessed, and would again, by simply obeying the laws which they have enacted themselves, and of which they have never as yet made the slightest complaint? For, be it remembered, that previous to the Rebellion no law was ever passad by the U. S. Congress that was not dictated, or approved of, by the slave-holding power of the South. The only crime which they speak of at all, is the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency—and this, my friends, they contrived themselves, and broke up the Democratic party, to make sure of electing him.

Have you reflected that no compromise that we could possibly offer would be accepted, or even entertained by them, unless embracing terms disgraceful to all who offer them, and absolutely destructive to the Government? Let us imagine for a moment that, through some self-constituted committee, a parley is had, in order to learn on what conditions our erring brothers can be induced to give us peace and the Union? And suppose that we are met by the demand for unconditional recognition of their independence, payment of the Confederate debt, indemnification for all losses sustained by the war, including destruction of railroads, burning of bridges, cities and towns, and losses of every description, whether by our hands or theirs. Now, these conditions would be too *frightful* for even the Democratic party to advocate; and so, my dear friends, the inevitable consequence would be a renewal of the conflict, with ten-fold more fury, than before, with the disadvantage of increased strength to the rebellion, and diminished power

of the Government. The simple truth is, the moment we stop to parley, that moment we are lost. The great Republic will have been conquered, and republican institutions will be things of the past.

PEACE!

How ardently we all desire peace. The nation is pouring out its millions for peace, and our brave, loyal soldiers are flooding the land with their blood for peace. Indeed, we all wish for peace, but how is it to be obtained? The Democratic party say that, to obtain it, we must "compromise." Ah, friends, we have just seen where compromise will lead us. There is only one party to this war that can make peace—and that party is the one that broke it. The Government has no power to make peace, for the simple reason that it neither commenced the war nor gave any cause for it. It was attacked suddenly, without provocation, and it has no option but to defend itself against the would-be assassins.

The rebels, who broke the peace, can restore it at any moment, and that, too, without staining themselves with the slightest shade of dishonor. They have simply to throw away their arms, hasten to, what would then be, their peaceful homes, and resume their duties as citizens of, what would then be, a great and proud republic. Were they to do this, the weapons would instantly drop from the hands of the loyal soldiers, and their faces would be turned joyfully towards their Northern homes. Were the Northern soldiers to lay down their arms, and the armies to be disbanded, would the same results follow? Alas, no, for the weapons of the rebel soldiers, instead of falling from their hands, would be grasped with increased vigor. Their armies, instead of being disbanded, would be increased and strengthened; their faces, instead of Southward, would be turned Northward, and waste and desolation would mark their track.

Thus, my Democratic friends, I think we can see clearly

that the compromise and peace policy of the Democratic party can lead to no possible good, but, if successful, can result in nothing but disaster and ruin to our country.

But what shall we say of the policy of

"PUTTING DOWN THE ADMINISTRATION?"

Have you reflected, friends, that the Administration at the present time is the Government—and, to put down one, is to put down the other? Therefore, it would seem that it is the policy of the Democratic party to put down the United States Government. I need not tell you that this can only be done by rebellion—precisely as the rebels are endeavoring to accomplish the same thing at the present moment. Surely, Democrats do not contemplate anything so hideous as this! Yet civil war has commenced, and we know not where it will end.

We come now to the Democratic policy of

"THE CONSTITUTION AS IT IS,
AND THE
UNION AS IT WAS."

This is a captivating policy, because of the happy memories which cluster in such profusion around the old Constitution and the Union. But it is also delusive, because of the utter impossibility of a restoration of the Union as it was. That delusive, though happy, condition is gone, never more to return. Slavery has reared its *horn in front,* and is endeavoring, with demoniac power, to strike down this great Republic, and is daily demonstrating that a peaceful and permanent union of freedom and slavery, as it was, is impossible.

But, "*The Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was,*" can anything be more pleasing to the ears of a Union-loving man than the sound of these words? To my mind, no music can be sweeter. But, my friends, the harmony is sadly marred, when we reflect that the shocking rebel discord, with which our ears are now assailed, has been in secret preparation for more than thirty years; conse-

quently, while we were resting in such seeming security and peace, we were actually slumbering on a volcano. Yes, my fellow-Democrats, during all those years, every portion of ground beneath our feet was being mined, and a rebel Guy Fawkes stood, with lighted taper in hand, ready to fire the train, the explosion of which was intended to bring upon our beloved country the destruction which we now see falling around us. Now, had we known what frightful ruin was in preparation for us, do you think we could have been happy and contented under the Constitution and the Union as it was? The truth is, our slumbers were peaceful, because we were in ignorance of the fate that awaited us.

And how can we return to the Constitution and the Union as it was, when we know, from present experience, that the result of an election, or any other fancied wrong, would be likely, at any moment, to light up a rebellion, perhaps, even more terrible than that we are now passing through?

Now, without doubt, great efforts will be made to bring about a restoration of the Union in accordance with the Democratic policy of "The Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was," and, as these efforts may prove successful, I would like to anticipate coming events a little, in order to see what results may be hoped for from this policy. Suppose, then, that the Northern people are informed, through some self-constituted committee, by the aid of mysterious, under-ground telegraphic communications, that the rebels are willing to return to their allegiance, provided that all their rights under the Constitution are guaranteed to them, including the right to carry their slave property into and through any State or Territory of the United States, with a general amnesty to all political offenders, including rebels of every grade, from Jeff. Davis down to the smallest Northern sympathisers. These terms would be considered by the North as exceedingly liberal on the part of the South, and would be accepted almost with-

out a dissenting voice by the North. If no better could be had, I think they would also be accepted by the South. For, with these guarantees, they could sooner or later obtain all else they might want.

Let us now imagine everything thus satisfactorily arranged, and that we are thenceforward living under the "Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was." Elections all through the South have been held; an extra session of Congress has been called; this is the day appointed for its meeting, and as the hour of noon has arrived, we will imagine ourselves at the Capitol, and see the Southern members take their seats. We are just in time—for the members are all here. Do you see those two gentlemen, arm in arm, coming through the door? They are Davis and Floyd—and there, too, come Toombs and Wise, together with a host of other rebel lions. Observe with what amiable *condescension* they nod to Northern members! and with what insolent dignity they stride to their seats! Hush, friends, the roll has been called, and business is about to commence. Southern rights, as to slavery in the Territories, is called, and is now under discussion. It is contended by those advocating slavery interests, that the Divine institution, by virtue of the Constitution, exists, and is protected in all Territories of the United States; and, therefore, whenever the people of a Territory neglect to pass laws for the protection of slave property—that then the General Government is bound by the Constitution to give all needful protection to the slave-holder and his property.

This, my friends, is the old question of squatter sovereignty revived, which has heretofore convulsed the country to its very centre, and which was ostensibly the cause of the present rebellion. Both parties now seem anxious to avoid lengthened debates, so the question is brought to a vote. The Democratic members, from five or six Northern States, voting with the fifteen Democratic Slave States, give a large majority for Southern equal rights in the Territories.

One plank in the Republican Platform was "No more Slave States." That plank will now have to be removed, and "No more Free States" must be inserted in the Democratic Platform.

Another Kansas policy, under another James Buchanan, as each new State knocks for admission into the Union, will make short work of the Territories. And that we shall always have a James Buchanan as President, in all time to come, is just as certain as that Northern Democrats will, in all the coming future, cast their votes with their brother Democrats of the South.

Mr. Cobb has just caught the eye of the Speaker, and is offering a resolution that the Confederate Debt be assumed by the United States. Mr. Cobb is a noted financier, especially in large moneyed transactions. His gigantic intellect will doubtless soon reach a solution of this subject, which bears so heavily on Southern capitalists. Mr. Cobb is urging, with great eloquence and feeling, that a most unjust and wicked "Abolition war" was waged against the South, for the purpose of abolishing their Divine Institution; that in self-defence they incurred a large debt; that they deprecated war, and only wanted their rights, and to be let alone! That the Abolition Administration of Mr. Lincoln refused them their rights, and commenced a bloody war upon them, and therefore it would be nothing more than common justice for the United States to pay their debt.

Mr. Cobb's speech has produced great excitement. About twenty members are on their feet, all claiming the floor; in the midst of the confusion Mr. Sumner has caught the eye of the Speaker, and is recognized as in order. Cries of "Sit down in front," are heard from the Republican side of the House, and "Down with the Abolitionist," from the opposition. Mr. Sumner merely wished to correct some remarks of the last speaker, as to the war being commenced by the Abolition party. Immense excitement is now seen to prevail all over the hall. In the midst of the uproar the previous question is called. A vote is taken

and five to ten Democratic States North, acting with the fifteen Democratic Slave States, give a large majority for assuming the Confederate debt.

The leaders of the Democratic party were truly prophetic when they assured us, in such disheartening tones, that our debt would be so enormous that it would never be paid.

But we have no time for any thing now but to attend to Congressional proceedings. Fresh trouble is brewing.

The Secretary of the House is reading a petition from the people of Pennsylvania asking that certain parties, now residing in that State contrary to law, "be removed." The prayer, in question, is signed by a large number of citizens of Pennsylvania. The case is this: About a year or more ago, a slave-holder, with about thirty of his property, came into Pennsylvania, in accordance with the Peace Compromise and Guarantees, but he failed to go through the State. Now, the laws of Pennsylvania prohibit slavery in the State, yet, in the Compromise for Peace, the right of slave-holders to carry their property into and through a State was guaranteed. The owner of the slaves insists that he is on his way through the State, and deprecates, in strong terms, the idea of living permanently among abolitionists. But the question is to be debated—let us listen. Mr. Valandigham, of Ohio, is on the floor. He contends that it is exceedingly uncivil in the people of Pennsylvania to contemplate such a rudeness, as driving a gentleman out of their State, especially when he has committed no crime, but, on the other hand, has conferred an honor on them.

Mr. Rhett of S. C. now has the floor, and contends that, as he understands the question, the Constitution of the United States carries protection to slavery wherever it may happen to exist, whether in a Territory or State; that whenever one or more slaves are lawfully within the precincts of a State, that then the Constitution falls as a mantle of protection over the slave-holder and his property,

and the general government has no option but to sustain the Constitution and to enforce the laws. A large number are now on their feet claiming the floor, but the previous question is called, and the same farce of voting is gone through with. A large majority has decided that slavery is the law of the land in Pennsylvania, so long as it suits the convenience of slave-holders to maintain it there. This may be regarded by some as a blessing, and by others as a curse, and here I leave it. My present purpose being merely to show some of the consequences that must inevitably flow from the Peace Compromise Policy of the Democratic Party.

But, my dear friends, there is yet through this detested policy one more calamity to befall our country, of which, as to good or evil, there can be but one opinion, at least among loyal and true hearted men.

A leading feature of the Democratic policy, as enunciated by those who control and shape it, was repudiation of the United States debt. This bitter cup is yet to be pressed to our lips, and when this portion of Democratic policy is consummated, then indeed will the ruin of the great Republic be complete.

It seems incredible that the idea of repudiation of the United States debt could for a moment be entertainted by the Democratic Party; and yet it is part and parcel of its policy.

During the last political campaign it was hinted at delicately in some places, and advocated openly in others. In this section it was a leading issue at the Fall Election. Now the South, by aid of the Democratic Party, can and will carry through any policy which tends to advance Southern interests, and as nothing would so effectually exalt the South and abase the North, as to hold sacred the Confederate debt, and repudiate that of the United States, of course, that policy would be unscrupulously adopted.

The same machinery which we have seen used in perpetrating all previous mischiefs could be employed with

equal success in giving this death-blow to the nation. It would be necessary only to offer a resolution, call the previous question, count the ballots, and the deed is done. The fifteen slave States would, of course, be a unit, both for holding the Confederate bonds sacred and for repudiating the United States debt. These States, with from five to ten free States voting with them, would consummate the deed. The United States debt would be repudiated. The drama would be ended, and the curtain would fall upon republican institutions for ever.

Thus, my dear friends, I have endeavored to draw your attention to the consequences which must inevitably flow from a successful carrying out of the Democratic policy of Compromise, Peace, or the Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was; although, it is quite possible that it may undergo some changes, to suit changing circumstances.

Within a few days past I have perceived symptoms of a change of base in party policy. Instead of endeavoring to reach the Constitution as it is and the Union as it was, through compromise, peace, &c., the policy now seems to be tending in the direction of *separation*, to be followed at the proper time, by the original policy of compromise, peace, &c. The end, however, will be precisely the same; and the Democratic leaders, both North and South, know well that a separation is impossible, without entailing upon both sections an endless war. Why, my Democratic friends, every question that would come up for settlement by negotiations would furnish material for a new war. An attempt to fix the boundary line would give us stock in trade for a hundred years' war. Nearly all the bloody wars of European nations have been wars for boundary lines. So, also, the Fugitive Slave Law, or a want of one, would be an inexhaustible *placer* of war. An attempt to divide the Territories would yield a rich harvest of war. A dissolution of the Union would be found beset by so many difficulties that the idea would soon be rejected as

impracticable. We should then have no alternative but to renew the contest, or to adopt the degrading compromise and peace policy.

A renewal of hostilities would be found impossible, for the simple reason that by the time we would have arrived at this stage of negotiation we should have no armies. Nothing then would be left for us but to accept the policy of the "Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was," with all the consequent evils which I have so feebly attempted to recite; and to which we must now add the right of secession.

Thus it will be seen that by the circuitous route of separation we have arrived at the same results as if the Democratic policy had been carried through, without an attempt at separation, with this difference, however, that with a failure to conquer the rebellion we should lose the power, not only to dictate a peace that might be honorable to both parties, but also the power to prevent a dishonorable one being dictated to us.

It may be urged that if these things were attempted the people would rise as one man, and hurl destruction on those who would propose to us such degradation. Ah! my friends, the people could not rise higher than they did at the firing on Sumpter, and yet how low we stand now. Then we were as one man in the support of a free Government; now, however, it would seem, judging by recent elections, that the whole Democratic Party is opposed to it.

But, in the event of a restoration of the Union, of whatever sort, being vouchsafed to us, we must remember that the South, as heretofore, by the aid of Northern Democrats, would always have entire control of the Government and its policy; and, therefore, the people would have no power to rise, and no option but to submit. So long as the Democratic party, or any other organization, cast their strength into the hands of the slave power, so long will the fifteen Southern States be able to rule, and give laws and rulers to the nineteen Northern ones; and, if the element

of slavery is left permanently in the Southern States, to unite the whole fifteen as one solid body, then will that solid body be always able to detatch sufficient strength from the Northern States to give a perpetual lease of power to the fifteen slave-holding States.

The President would, therefore, be always chosen with reference to his devotion to Southern interests; and on his choice of Cabinet officers would depend his nomination and election to the Presidency. All Government officials, whether civil, naval or military, would in like manner be pledged to carry out Southern policy. And, consequently, if a rising of the North against slave power should ever occur, the Floyds, the Cobbs, &c, instead of supplying us with arms and ammunition, would exercise a watchful care that nothing of the sort should reach our hands. Such has always been their policy and such will it be in the future.

So, my dear friends, a rising would be useless, and a rebellion impossible. The spirit of American freedom would be for ever crushed, and what little fire of liberty might for a time be left smouldering in the general ruins, would be speedily extinguished. The young giant of the western world would be prostrate at the feet of a slave-holding power; the last expiring groan of the great Republic would sound the death-knell of freedom on this Continent for ever.

"So sleeps the pride of former days—
So glory's thrill is o'er—
And hearts that once beat high for praise
Now feel that pulse no more.

"No more to chiefs and ladies bright
The Harp of Tara swells;
The chord alone, that breaks at night,
Its tale of ruin tells.

"Thus, freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives,
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
To show that still she lives."

And now, fellow Democrats, I have endeavored to give you a view, as I see it, of the ruin that threatens our dear, native land; I have striven, also, to describe the *modus operandi* by which these terrible results are to be brought about. Having pointed out the danger, it is proper that I should endeavor to show how it may be avoided.

First, then, let loyal Democrats stop at once their senseless war against the Government, on the plea of opposing the Republican party. Let them instantly forsake their leaders, who are really so closely allied with the rebels, that there is no safety for themselves, except in the success of the rebellion. Let Democrats show less sympathy with Fort Lafayette prisoners, and more for the sufferings of loyal soldiers. Let them exhibit less hatred of "Honest Old Abe," and less love for the traitor Jeff. Davis. Let them fight less lustily for the Constitution, and more heartily for the Union. Let them assist in saving the nation, and the Constitution will take care of itself. If they are in truth Democrats, let them abstain from every word, act or deed that may aid the rebellion, which is nothing more nor less than a war for the destruction of Democracy.

If they will do all this, and come up manfully to the support of the Government, then the Republic may be saved. If, however, the Democratic Party arrays itself along side of a lordly Southern aristocracy in opposition to Free America, then indeed is the nation doomed; its mission is ended, and freedom will have fled from the Western Continent forever.

WM. WRIGHT,

Meadow Lawn, Burlington, N. J.

January, 1863

☞ This pamphlet is intended for gratuitous distribution, and to be read around the camp-fires. It can be obtained by sending to the above address.

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